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Woodbury, James Trask.

Speech delivered in the
House of Representatives of Mass.,
Feb. 3, 1851...

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S P E E C H

DELIVERED IN

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OF MASSACHUSETTS, FEBRUARY 3, 1851,

UPON THE QUESTION OF GRANTING TWO THOUSAND DOLLARS TO AID
THE TOWN OF ACTON IN BUILDING A MONUMENT OVER
THE REMAINS OF

CAPT. ISAAC DAVIS, ABNER HOSMER, AND JAS. HAYWARD,

ACTON MINUTE MEN, KILLED AT CONCORD FIGHT, APRIL 19, 1775.

BY JAMES TRASK WOODBURY.

MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM ACTON.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE TOWN OF ACTON.

BOSTON:

PRINTED BY BAZIN & CHANDLER, 37 CORNHILL.
1851.

It may be said the following speech is furnished the press not precisely as it was delivered, but corrected, amended and improved by the author himself,—he speaking entirely without notes, on the spur of the occasion, occupying about one hour and a half in its delivery. It is believed, however, that what is here written out is as near the original, as is usual in like cases. The exact thoughts and imagery are, of course, in a measure lost, except so far as they are remembered (which we fancy will be for a long time) by the deeply affected hearers.

S P E E C H .

MR. SPEAKER, —

I HAD not expected that the question would be taken on these Resolves, at this day, or at this hour. I am not prepared, as I would have been, to go into this, to me, and the people I represent, exceedingly interesting matter. But the discussion of the merits of this Bill has come on; objections, — very unexpected objections, — have been urged to its passage to a third reading; and I have just concluded, that I may as well state my whole case, to this House, now as ever. As I had the honor to present this petition, and was chosen by the town of Acton on the Committee for procuring aid from the Commonwealth, it will be expected of me, that I should make some extended remarks; otherwise I might have sat in dumb silence during the passage of these Resolves, leaving to other abler men the stirring theme. But, even in that case, I doubt, — averse as I honestly am to talking in any assembly, — I doubt, whether I could have carried out my purpose; I doubt whether I should have had sufficient “restraining grace,” after what has been said by my respected friend behind me, from West Brookfield, and others, in opposition to this Bill. In his remarks he has advanced the full non-resistance faith. He has endeavored to turn into ridicule the battles of our American Revolution, and to hold up to sneers and contempt the heroes, *the Christian heroes*, — yes, *Christian heroes*, — who bared their breasts, and poured out their blood like water, in that strug-

gle for our National Independence. He endeavored to make us believe, that monuments to their memory are all wrong ; and his policy and counsel would be not only to erect no more, but dig down, razing them even with the earth, all that now adorn the land. That proud pile of granite, yonder, on Bunker's holy height, over the mouldering blood and bones of General Joseph Warren, President of the Provincial Congress, the youthful, gallant Major McClary, of the New Hampshire line, Stark's regiment, and all the rest of that hecatomb of patriots, who offered themselves up, "*living sacrifices*" on the altar of their country and their God, is to fall with the rest. This goes to revolutionize the government of the Commonwealth. The Adjutant-General's office is to be abolished ; the militia of the Commonwealth at once dismissed, disbanded, — disgracefully disbanded. Their occupation being gone, — "*Troja fuit*" being written on the whole system of armed defence, by sea and by land.

Sir, are you prepared for this ? Is this House prepared for it ? Are the people of the old Bay State prepared for it ? Why, that marble bust of General Washington, in his regimentals, that stands in the well known niche of this State House, would answer, and the answer would be, an emphatic, indignant "*No !*" We are prepared, Sir, as I humbly think, to do no such thing. The government of this Commonwealth, upon that theory, could not stand one hour. She would, being just as it is, need force to govern it, and must have force to govern it ; or else, it is very certain, it will not be governed. Run out this theory to its consistent, legitimate conclusions, and there would never be another law passed in this Commonwealth armed with penalty ; and without penalty, there is not, and there cannot be, *any law*.

All law, for the protection of life, liberty, property, or any thing else dear to human beings, must immediately, if no longer armed with a penalty, sink into bald advice. And the duty of legislators would be merely to say, "*We advise the good people of this Commonwealth to do, so and so.*" But I am done with these objections. I would respect, for I feel obliged to respect, the conscientious scruples of those

gentlemen who have urged them. They are men of sterling worth and integrity, though as I think clinging, in this matter, to a dream, a phantasy of the imagination, which, the moment an attempt is made, on a small or a large scale, to reduce to practice, vanishes into thin air. (a)

But what is the application before you? What its objects? What the grounds on which it is urged? — Who was Captain Isaac Davis? Who was Abner Hosmer? Who was James Hayward? And what was Concord Fight? What did they fight for, and what did they win? These were Massachusetts Province militia men, — not in these good, quiet, piping times of peace, — but in 1775, at the very dark, gloomy outbreak of the American Revolution. Let us turn back to the bloody annals of that eventful day. Let us see, as well as we can at this distance of three quarters of a century, just how matters and things stood. General Gage had full possession of this city. The flag that waved over it was not that of “THE OLD PINE TREE; — nor that one with that beautiful insignia over your head, Sir, with the uplifted armed right hand, (which, by the way, looks very little like non-resistance,) lettered over with this most warlike, and, to my taste, most appropriate motto, in a wrongful world like this, “*Ense petit placidam sub libertate quietem.*” No, no. It was the flag of that old hereditary despot, George the Third. And, if there had been no Isaac Davis, or other men of his stamp on the ground in that day, if they had all been of the mind of the opposers of this Bill of noble Resolves who have spoken, (on reporting which unanimously to this House, before I forget it, I feel bound, in behalf of these petitioners, to express my most profound obligations to the Committee, whatever may be their fate here, or elsewhere, — *they did their duty to the memory of these brave men, God bless them!* it remains to be seen, whether we do ours); — I say, if the men of that day had been all of the mind of some of the opposers of these Resolves, the flag of the crouching lion, the flag of Queen Victoria, due successor to that same hated George the Third, first the oppressor, and then the unscrupulous murderer of our fathers; yes, — I

know what I say, the unscrupulous murderer of our fathers, — would still wave over this beautiful city, and would now be streaming in the wind over every American ship in this harbor. Where, in that case, would have been this Legislature? Why, Sir, it would never have been; and my conscientious friend from West Brookfield, instead of sitting here a good Free-Soil man, as he is, would have been called to no such high vocation as making laws for a free people, for the good old Commonwealth of Massachusetts; voting for Robert Rantoul, Jr., or Charles Sumner, or Hon. Mr. Winthrop, to represent us in a body known as the United States Senate, pronounced the most august, dignified legislative assembly in the civilized world. Oh no! far otherwise. If permitted to legislate at all, it would be done under the dictation of Queen Victoria; and if he made laws, it would be with a ring in his nose to pull him this way and that way, or with his head in the British lion's mouth, — that same lion's mouth which roared in 1775, showing his teeth and lashing his sides at our fathers.

This city was in full possession of the enemy, and had been, for several months. General Gage had converted that house of prayer, the Old South Church, — where we met a few days since, to sit, delighted auditors to that unsurpassed election-sermon, — into a riding-school, a drilling-place for his cavalry. The pulpit, and all the pews on the lower floor, were with Vandal violence torn out and tan brought in, and here the dragoons of King George practised, on their prancing war-horses, the sword-exercise, with tory ladies and gentlemen for spectators in the galleries. At the nineteenth of April, 1775, it was not "*Ense petit placidam, sub libertate quietem.*" "*Sub libertate*"! It would have been rather, "*Sub vili servitio*" — *sub* anything — rather than liberty, under the British Crown! Information had been received from most reliable sources, vile tories being sprinkled all over this land, (and from what has fallen out here during this discussion I have felt a fear, that the race of tories is not yet wholly extinct, — I hope it is groundless,) that valuable cannon, powder, ball, and other munitions of war, were de-

posited in Concord. General Gage determined to have them. Concord was a great place in '75. The Provincial Congress had just suspended its session there of near two months, adjourning over to the tenth of May, with Warren for their President, and such men as old Samuel Adams, John Hancock, John Adams, and James Otis, as their advisers. Yes, Concord was the centre of brave old Middlesex, containing within it all the early battle-grounds of liberty, — *Old North Bridge, Lexington Common, and Bunker Hill*, — and was for a time the capital of the Province, the seat of government of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay. And Concord had within it as true-hearted whig patriots as ever breathed. Rev. Mr. Emerson was called a "high son of liberty." To contend with tyrants and stand up against them, resisting unto blood, fighting for the inalienable rights of the people, was a part of his holy religion. And he was one of the most godly men and eloquent ministers in the Colony. He actually felt it to be his duty to God, — I hope my friend from West Brookfield, and my other very esteemed friend, on my right, from Worcester, will not be struck with horror at the mention of it, so as to faint away, — that prayerful, pious man thought it his duty to quit that most delightful town and village, and that most affectionate church and people, and enter the continental army and serve them as chaplain of a regiment. He married a daughter of his predecessor, Rev. Mr. Bliss; and Mr. Bliss had a son, who was well known as a zealous tory, and was always suspected as the guilty wretch, who, in this case, acted the spy and the informer of General Gage. He was afterwards an officer in the British army through the Revolution. So sure were the whigs of that day that young Bliss was the guilty one in this vile transaction, that I verily believe, from what I have heard them say, that he would have lost his head if it had not been for his noble brother-in-law, Rev. Mr. Emerson. No wonder, when we reflect upon it, that our fathers at last determined that those scrupulous gentlemen who could not take up arms against King George, must quit the land *forthwith*, or walk into close jail. (b)

On the eighteenth of April, at about eleven o'clock at night, General Gage detached eight hundred men, under Colonel Smith and Major Pitcairn, to Concord,— the expedition to be managed with the utmost secrecy. He set them over Charles River, landing them at Lechmere Point. But the Boston boys had their eyes and ears open; and the moment they landed and their line of march was taken up, information was given in every direction. Paul Revere was the honored messenger despatched by Warren to bear the news to Samuel Adams and John Hancock, who were at Lexington, and to seize whom, it was suspected, was one object of the expedition. They were staying at the house of Rev. Jonas Clark, another war-man of 1775, in the person of a devout Puritan minister of the gospel, of the Plymouth Rock stamp, a connexion, by marriage, of John Hancock; and it is supposed, that it was the influence of Clark that nailed Hancock to the cause of popular liberty. It was Clark's custom to keep the nineteenth of April, every year, as a sort of annual passover, till the end of the Revolutionary War; and this example of his was imitated by the clergymen of the neighboring towns. Addresses were delivered; and especially was the God of Heaven implored to interpose for the rescue of their bleeding country. Few towns equalled, and no town went before Lexington, in zeal, and courage, and self-devotion to the great cause of liberty; and one chief reason for this was, that Rev. Jonas Clark was their beloved minister, and was sound on the question of the rights of the people against the power and prerogatives of the Crown, and had more zeal and more knowledge on the subject than any other man in the county. He wrote their resolves, and advocated them before the town.

Here they lie concealed, with a strong guard of soldiers round the house. These faithful sentinels volunteered to keep watch over Hancock and Adams, and see at any rate that Gage should not be able to take them. A little after midnight, Paul Revere arrived at Rev. Mr. Clark's, in Lexington. He was hailed by the guard, under Sergeant Munroe, and stopped. Munroe, ignorant of Revere's character and

errand, refused to let him enter Clark's house. Munroe told him that the family had retired to rest, and desired that they might not be disturbed by any noise about the house. "Noise!" said Revere, "you'll soon have a noise that will disturb you all. British troops have left Boston, and will soon be among you." Clark opened a window, and asked who was there. Revere told him his business was with Hancock and Adams. Hancock being awake, knew Revere's voice, and cried out, "Come in, Revere, we are not afraid of you!" Lincoln soon arrived, another messenger from Warren, who went out over Roxbury Neck. They had borne the news and writing from Warren, that the British had left Boston ten or fifteen hundred strong, and were probably bound for Concord. The alarm then went in every direction, to rouse up the minute-men. Hancock and Adams were compelled by their friends to retire to Mr. Reed's house, at the north part of the town, up the Bedford Road. Hancock could hardly be persuaded to thus turn his back on the British. It has been said, that Rev. Mr. Clark took his gun in the afternoon, and fell in with the rest in pursuit of the fleeing British on their retreat.

The moment Colonel Smith began to move, to his surprise the bells in every steeple began to ring, and minute-guns to be fired, and the whole country to be alarmed. Sagacious officer as he was, he at once concluded it would not do for him to advance seventeen miles into a country all alive with brave patriots, with only a force of eight hundred men, if he ever expected to get back alive. He at once sent a trusty messenger to General Gage, at head-quarters, in this city of Boston, to order out at least eleven hundred men under Lord Percy, a young nobleman of great skill and courage, for his relief. It was done; and about nine o'clock in the morning, on the nineteenth, these eleven hundred men, at the tune of Yankee Doodle, marched over Roxbury Neck, and on through Brookline, Brighton, and Cambridge, and met Smith and Pitcairn about half a mile below old Lexington Meeting-House, about two o'clock, on their perilous, bloody retreat,

“so much exhausted with fatigue,” says Stedman, a historian of that day, “that they were obliged to lie down for rest on the ground, their tongues hanging out of their mouths, like tired hounds after a severe chase.” Had not Percy come up just as he did, it is supposed that Colonel Smith would have surrendered in a few moments. But he held out as he did, because he felt sure that Percy was on the way, and would arrive soon with cannon. He came just in season with two large pieces. These were advantageously planted in the highway, near the old Munroe Tavern; and it was only the missiles of death from their iron mouths, that could keep at bay the furious Provincials.

No wonder they were furious! They had seen their fathers and brothers slaughtered, murdered, (for I call it murder for eight hundred men to attack and massacre forty, and these dispersed, or dispersing.) One of the Harringtons, (two being among the slain at Lexington,) was shot near his own door-step, on the north side of the Common. His wife, at the window, saw him reel and fall, and then rise up, the blood gushing from his breast; stretching out both hands toward her, as if for assistance, he fell again; she ran to meet him,—heroic young woman!—and he died in her arms, covering her with his blood. They had seen their houses plundered, and set on fire. Why should they not have been furious? What would make men furious, if all this would not? Why, till that morning, these very men were among the best subjects that King George had in all his realm! They had fought for him in the old French War, only twenty years before, and, under the brave Wolfe, on the Heights of Abraham, before the walls of Quebec, by incredible feats of valor, conquered the French, wresting from them the Canadas, and driving them out from all their possessions in North America, and with them the subtle, jesuitical Roman Catholic power, giving the supremacy here to the Protestant Puritan faith, as I trust in God, to the end of time. Yes, these very men, who in arms on the nineteenth of April, 1775, were rushing to battle against King George, had fought

through this war with the French and the Indians, — a more severe war, far more, for these Northern Colonies, at least, than the seven years' war of the Revolution. Not a battle was fought in these parts, where the sons of Massachusetts and New Hampshire did not pour out their blood like water for King George and the British Crown. In 1757, in the French War, full one third part of the able-bodied men of these Colonies took the field. The military service of Massachusetts alone, in 1758, amounted to one million of dollars; and the tax on real estate was equal to one third its income. We know nothing of taxes under the gentle sway of our Christian Commonwealth, compared with our fathers under the Crown; and never shall, if matters are managed right.

And all for what, Sir? I answer, to extend the boundaries of King George's mighty empire here in this new world, and to add fresh glory and lustre to the British Crown. It cost them many tears, as well as much blood and treasure, to tear themselves away from their fathers and their brethren after the flesh. Old John Stark, and Israel Putnam, and those men, in their old age, years subsequent to our American Revolution, when they spoke of "*the War*," always meant the old French War of 1755, because it was so severe. It was "**THE WAR**." It was the school, in which they were taught the art of arms; and it made officers and soldiers, who, after conquering for their ungrateful, wicked King, the Canadas; were able to conquer *from* him, twenty years after, the old Thirteen Colonies of North America.

But, I was speaking of the loyalty of the men of 1775. Indulge me in one quotation of many that I might make, from the Acton Town Records, as kept in those troublous times. In December, 1772, three years before Concord Fight, a large committee was chosen to consider, as they say, "*the state of the rights of the colonists*, and the violation of said rights, and report a draft of such notes as they shall think proper." And here is the Report of the Committee, presented and adopted at an adjourned meeting, a month later.

“Taking into serious consideration the alarming circumstances of this Province, relating to the violation of our charter rights and privileges, (as we apprehend,) by the British Administration, we are of opinion, that the rights of the colonists, natural, ecclesiastical, and civil, are well stated, by the town of Boston. [Acton loved Boston. They were in close correspondence.] And it is our opinion, the taxing of us without our consent, the making the Governor of the Province and the Judges of the Superior Court, independent of the people, and dependent on the Crown, by having their salary paid by the Crown out of money extorted from us, and many other instances of encroachments upon our said charter rights, are *intolerable grievances*, and have a direct tendency to *overthrow our happy constitution, and bring us into a state of abject slavery*. But, *we have a gracious sovereign*, [see how those old Christian heroes stuck to him till the last, — blamed the ministry, but blessed the King; that King never had such subjects before or since.] But we have a *gracious sovereign, who is the father of America*, as well as of Great Britain; and, as the man in whom we had no confidence is removed from before the throne, and another, in whom we hope to have reason to put confidence, placed in his stead, we hope, that our petitions will be forwarded and heard, and all our grievances redressed.”

What a patient, noble-hearted, truthful, loyal, confiding, affectionate generation of men they were! And, remember, these were the men, exasperated beyond all further endurance by the course of a deluded Parliament and besotted Ministry, (at the head of which was that chicken-hearted, wrong-headed villain, — I am not able to speak of him in milder or more respectful terms, *Lord North*,) — flew to arms the nineteenth of April, 1775. These were the men, who then hunted up their powder-horns and bullet-pouches, took down their guns from the hooks and ground up their bayonets, on that most memorable of all days in the annals of the old thirteen Colonies, nay, in the annals of our Anglo-Saxon race, — nay, in the annals of the world, — which record the struggles that noble men have made in all ages to be free. Yes, to my mind, Mr. Speaker, it is a more glorious day, a day more full of thrilling incidents and *great steps, taken by the people to be free*, than even the Fourth of

July itself, 1776, when the formal Declaration of Independence was made. Why, Sir, the nineteenth of April, '75, that resistance, open, unorganized, armed, marshalled resistance, at the Old North Bridge, — that marching down in battle array at that soul-stirring air which every soldier in this house must remember to this day, for the tune is in fashion yet, I mean "*The White Cockade*," (for that was the tune at which they marched to that most renowned fight,) — *was, of itself, a prior Declaration of Independence, written out not with ink upon paper or parchment*, but a Declaration of Independence, made by drawn swords, uplifted right arms, fixed bayonets, ground sharp, cracking musketry, — a Declaration written out in the best blood of this land, at Lexington first, and finally all the way for eighteen miles from Old North Bridge to Charlestown Neck, where these panting fugitives found shelter under the guns of British ships-of-war riding at anchor in Mystic River, ready to receive them, — a Declaration, that put more at hazard, and cost the men who made it more, after all, of blood and treasure, than that of 1776. It cost Davis, Hosmer, and Hayward, and hundreds of others equally brave and worthy, their hearts' blood. It cost many an aged father and mother their darling son, many a wife her husband, many a Middlesex maid her lover. O what a glorious, but O what a bloody day it was! That was the day which split in twain the British Empire, never again to be united!

Sir, the importance of wars, and battles, where armed hosts meet armed hosts, and grapple in the deadly strife, is not to be estimated by the numbers engaged, or the amount killed and wounded. No, no. The philosophic student of history looks farther. He looks at the moving motives, the zeal, acknowledged ends, and the consequences, the final results, which urged on, and which followed up the movement. These determine the true moral grand cause of all human conflicts. The great question is, "*Cui bono fuit*," — What good did it do? What did you fight for? What did you gain?

Looked at in this light, I am prepared to say with all

boldness, that no battle since the world began, of which poets have sung, or the sober muse of history made record, can be compared with *Concord Fight*, — with the scenes at Old North Bridge. Though only two Americans were killed, and only two British, and it occurred here, in this then little, insignificant British Province, in these ends of the earth, — I wish I was an orator, “as Brutus is,” then I would set forth to you, and to this House, by help of God, the *whole* truth upon this point. I would make it thrill through your good soul, as I know it verily does, at this agitated moment, thrill through my own.

What was the battle at Waterloo? What question did it settle? Why, simply, who of several kings should wear the crown. Well, I always thought, ever since I read of it when a boy, that, if I had fought on either side, it would have been with Napoleon against the allied forces. But what is the question to me, or what is the question to you, or to any of us, or our children after us, if we are to be ruled over by crowned heads and hereditary monarchs, what matters it who they are, or which one it shall be? In ancient times, three hundred Greeks, under Leonidas, stood in the pass of Thermopylæ, and for three successive days beat back and kept at bay five million Persians, led on by Xerxes the Great. It was a gallant act. But did it preserve the blood-bought liberties of Greece? No. In time they were cloven down, and the land of Demosthenes and Solon marked for ages by the footsteps of the slave. We weep over it; but we cannot alter it.

But not so, thank God! with “*Concord Fight*,” and by “*Concord Fight*” I say here, for fear of being misunderstood, I mean by “*Concord Fight*,” all the transactions of that day. I regard them as one great drama, scene 1st of which was at Lexington, early in the morning, when old Mrs. Harrington called up her son Jonathan, who alone, while I speak, survives, of all that host on either side in arms that day. He lives, — blessed be God! he still lives. You may see him at Lexington; and I think the sight of him will do any man good, — even my friends around me, who feel they must oppose

this Bill. I know him well, a trembling but still breathing memento of the renowned past, yet lingering, by mercy of God, on these "mortal shores," if for nothing else, to wake up your sleeping sympathies, and induce you, — if anything could, — to aid in the noble work of building over the bones of his slaughtered companions in arms, Davis, Hosmer, and Hayward, such a monument as they deserve. Oh, I wish he was here ! I wish he only stood on yonder platform — noble man ! I remember how, Governor Everett on one side and myself on the other, last April, at that grand Anniversary of the Fight, we held up his feeble frame, that you, Sir, and you, Sir, and others before me, who were on the spot, might look upon him. And did it not do your patriotic soul good ? Did not your heart swell, and throb with a quicker and stronger gush of gratitude, — gratitude first to God, secondly to those men, for these free institutions ? I cannot doubt it, Sir ; I know you too well to doubt it. Why, an American citizen who could look upon Jonathan Harrington with no interest, no gratitude, as he stood there last April before that assembled multitude, is a wicked man. He is an ungrateful wretch, who, if he does not deserve a halter, ought to wear a chain, and be a cringing slave to some titled monarch all his lifetime. Ingratitude, indifference toward the men, or the memory of the men, who with their swords in the high places of battle, won for us our liberties, so that we have a Christian Commonwealth, and can choose here, as we have done within a few days, "who shall rule over us," — so that we are governed by the ballot-box and the jury-box, and not by the cartridge-box, as most of our race are, and ever have been, and I fear ever will be, — so that, by help of God, we are permitted to live, as at this day, throughout all this vast ocean-bound Republic, with near twenty-five millions of freemen, under the noblest form of government the sun ever saw, it being self-governed, every man sitting under his own vine and under his own fig-tree, with none to molest and none to make afraid, with that loved banner of thirty-one stars, and I know not how many stripes, waving over us, — I say, ingratitude or indifference in such favored men, is a flagrant crime !

"Concord Fight" broke the ice — "Concord Fight." The rush from the heights at North Bridge was the first open, marshalled resistance to the King. Our fathers, cautious men, took then a step that they could not take back, — if they would, and would not, if they could. Till they made that attack, probably no British blood had been shed. If rebels at all, it was only on paper. They had not levied war; they had not, *vi et armis*, attacked their lawful King. But, by that act, they passed the Rubicon. Till then, *they might* retreat with honor. But, after that, it was *too late*. The sword was drawn, and had been made red in the blood of princes, in the person of their armed defenders. Attacking Captain Laurie and his detachment at North Bridge was, in law, attacking King George himself. Now, they *must* fight, or be eternally disgraced. And now they *did* fight, in good earnest! They drew the sword, and threw away, as well they might, the scabbard. Yesterday they humbly petitioned. They petition no longer. O what a change, from the nineteenth to the twentieth of April! They had been, up to that day, a grave, God-fearing, loyal set of men, honoring the King. Now, they strike for National Independence; and, after a seven years' war, by help of God, they won it. They obtained Nationality. It that day breathed into life. The Colony gave way for the State. That morning, Davis, and all of them, were *British colonists*. *They became, by that day's resistance, either rebels, doomed to die by the halter, or free, independent American Citizens!* If the old Pine-Tree Flag still waved over them unchanged, they themselves were changed in toto — entirely and for ever!

I have given you the language of the town-meeting resolves of the little town of Acton, with five hundred souls; dated December, 1772. I now beg your attention to a letter of instruction, passed June, 1776, in that same town, by the same people. Davis, Hosmer, and Hayward, are not there to discuss with them; but there are the men who fought by their side, on whom fell their mantle, — on whom gushed their hearts' blood, — men of the same sort. Instructions in writing to their Representative in the Provincial Court, or Congress, as it was often called.

"*To Mark White.* — SIR: Our not being favored with the Resolution of the Honorable House of Representatives, calling upon the several towns in this Colony to express their minds with *respect to the important question of American Independence*, is the occasion of our not expressing our mind sooner.

"But we now cheerfully embrace this opportunity to instruct you, on that important question. The subverting our Constitution, the many injuries and unheard-of barbarities which the Colonies have received from Great Britain, confirm us in the opinion, that the present age will *be deficient in their duty to God, their posterity and themselves, if they do not establish an American Republic. This is the only form of government we wish to see established.* [Mark those words.] But, we do not mean to dictate. [We, little Acton, had furnished the officers, and the men, that headed the first open, marshalled, armed column of attack upon the King's troops. They had the men "*who were not, by help of God, afraid to go*;" but they would not dictate.] We freely submit this interesting affair to the wisdom of the Continental Congress, who, we trust, are guided and directed by the Supreme Governor of the world; and we instruct you, Sir, to give them the strongest assurance, that, if they should declare America to be a *Free and Independent Republic*, your constituents will support and defend the measure, with their lives and fortunes."

They were as ready to furnish the men in '76 as in '75. They had some more of the same sort. They could lay out their money, they could shed their blood.

Understand me. I was speaking of the crime that I thought those guilty of, who view with ingratitude or indifference the labors and sufferings of our fathers, who won for us our independence. I cannot accuse my friends on this floor, who have, or who may, oppose the passage of this Bill of Resolves, of such a crime. No, no. I understand them to hold in the highest possible respect these Christian heroes; but they are conscientiously opposed to all war, even the war of the Revolution, and to the use of all physical force whatever among human beings. I honor their motives, their hearts; but I utterly condemn their sentiments, their theories. I suppose they would say as much of me.

I thank God, that every man has a right, and the same right, to his own opinions, however absurd, ridiculous, preposterous they may appear to his neighbor.

I repeat it, I wish Jonathan Harrington stood on that platform before you. It would be enough. I should stop, — I should sit down. Seventy-five years ago Jonathan Harrington was a brisk, brave young man of nineteen. On the evening of the eighteenth, he happened to see passing up the old Lexington Road, (it was a very bright, moon-light night,) several mounted British officers and privates. This advanced force guarded, as well as they could, all the high-ways and by-ways leading to Concord. They stopped every traveller who was going in that direction. But it was in vain. The news of this invasion went up over the hills and valleys of old Middlesex, hours and hours before the invaders themselves. And at an earlier hour of the night, large numbers of armed Provincials were present, and paraded with martial music on Lexington Common, waiting there some time; but at last, thinking that the British were not coming, that they had given up the expedition as a bad job, had scattered to their homes, and the houses near by. It was only at a later hour, at the shrill, soul-stirring tones of Harrington's fife, with loud tap of drum, beating to arms, that they gathered again in the morning, fewer in numbers but equally brave, equally ready, every man of them, to offer himself up a living sacrifice on the smoking altar of his invaded and injured country.

Before I proceed further in my remarks, let me say here, once for all, for the relief of my military friend, the member from Lexington, near my left, if he has had any anxiety on that head, — whose moistened but sharp eye has been upon me ever since I rose on this question, — that *I do not design*, in any way or manner, no, not by the most distant inuendo, to say or insinuate aught against the courage and brave bearing of Lexington men, or Concord men, or any other men under arms that day, — always excepting those bragging British regulars, some of whom craved this job as a pleasant spring-day excursion twenty miles into the country, after hav-

ing been shut up so long to camp duty in this city. They had been drinking wine and toddy all winter with the spies and tories not only of Massachusetts but of all New England. Boston was their head-quarters. They had dined with tory gentlemen, and sipped tea with tory ladies, and they were really made to believe that every Yankee, be he man or boy, would at the bare first sight of a real red-coat regular, flee like a frightened hind. One officer actually wrote home, a few months before the fight, that when it came to blows, he that could run the fastest would think himself the best fellow, and that any two regiments of General Gage's army would undoubtedly be able to beat, in the open field, the whole provincial force. Never was man more mistaken! If he himself was not made, by some death-spied ball of the Provincials, "to bite the dust" that bloody day, it is quite certain that he run for his life, lest he should. Earl of Sandwich had pronounced our fathers, about that time, "a set of raw, undisciplined, cowardly men;" and that, instead of forty or fifty thousand taking the field, he "hoped there would be two hundred thousand, — the more the better, the easier would be the conquest. If they do not run away, they will starve themselves into compliance with our measures." Pretty talk this for a British nobleman! I wonder what he thought, when he read General Gage's despatches, *dated* somewhere about Boston, Thursday morning, April the twentieth, 1775, telling the King and Parliament, if he told them the truth, that, on the night of the eighteenth, and the morning of the nineteenth, he sent out of Boston twenty miles to Concord a force of nineteen hundred men, to destroy military stores there, and strike terror into the heart of Old Sam Adams, as he was familiarly called at that day, — the broad-axe of the American Revolution, — and Joseph Warren and James Otis and John Adams; and that Colonel Smith, after killing eight men at Lexington Common, about half the distance to Concord, proceeded on, but was met at Old North Bridge in Concord, and repulsed and beaten back by the Provincials; and that, in spite of every thing, the rout, begun there, was continued till they came to Charlestown Neck,

within range of the cannon-shot from His Majesty's ships-of-war lying at anchor in Mystic River ; that they lost in this retreat of twenty miles, killed and wounded, over one thousand men, and if they had not, from the foot of Prospect Hill, run at the very top of their speed, (and God knows they could not run faster,) they would, every soul of them, have been killed or taken. Old Middlesex was allowed the privilege of opening this war ; of first baptizing the land with her blood. Here is the hallowed spot ! Here all our tribes must come up to keep their festal days, — hallowed as no other is, or ever can be, simply because here the first blow was struck, the first battle fought and won of our independence ; a battle, we verily believe, that settled, not our destiny merely, not the destiny of this Western Continent merely, but, if we rightly understood it in all its bearings and in all its results, — results which are not yet developed, and developing only in part, settling the destiny of the world, "*quo ad hoc*," as to human government and human power, as to the great question, *Who shall rule and reign*, — your liege lord and king, or "**WE, THE PEOPLE !**" Aye, Sir, "**WE, THE PEOPLE !**" What a phrase ! How fit to begin with in writing out a constitution — a frame of government.

In putting down, in plain black and white, our rights — the *precise grants of power* we make to those, who, from time to time, we choose to make law, interpret law, and execute law for us ; and expressly reserving to ourselves and our little ones who may come after us, all other power, whatever.

God did well to select old Middlesex, and the loved and revered centre of old Middlesex, namely, Concord, as the spot, not where this achievement was to be completed, but where it was to be begun, and well begun ; where the troops of crowned kings were to meet, not the troops of the people, but the people themselves ; and be routed and beaten from the field ; and what is more, and what is better, *stay beaten* — we hope, we doubt not, till the end of time. And let us remember, that our fathers, from first to last, in that eventful struggle, made most devout appeals to Almighty God, and carefully

gave to God all the glory for all that they in his strength had accomplished. The Roxbury Company, the first thing they did after they got together that morning, was to *march in a body, in line, with martial music*, to the house of their good old Whig Minister, Rev. Amos Adams, — after whom our worthy Minister to England, Amos Adams Lawrence, was named, — a *liberty man, a war man*, at least, so far as that war was concerned, and have prayers. It was so in other towns; and it was right. It was a noble thing in our fathers. Men going out to battle, who cannot with considerable confidence invoke the blessing of Almighty God, had better not go. Sir, I have noticed, you may have noticed, too, that every work and any work begun with prayer, is done, and well done, and looked back upon with joy and rejoicing. Certainly, it is usually so; all this going simply to prove that God governs his own world in spite of men and devils. It was so with "Concord Fight." It was so with the whole Revolutionary War. It was all begun, continued and ended in God. Every man and every boy, (and there were boys, many boys, in that Fight, not eighteen years old,) that went from the little mountain-town of Acton, with its five hundred souls, and, I have reason to think, there were over one hundred and fifty in the three companies, and including volunteers, went that morning from a house of prayer. Sir, there was then no other house in town. Would to God there was no other now. A more prayerful, pious, God-fearing, man-loving people I have never read or heard of, if you have, Sir. I should like to know who they are, and where they live. They were Puritans, Plymouth-Rock Puritans — men who would petition, and petition, and petition, most respectfully and most courteously; and when their petitions and petitioners — Old Ben Franklin and the rest — were proudly spurned away from the foot of the throne, petition again; and do it for more than ten long, tedious years; but, after all, they would fight, and fight as never man fought; and they did so fight. When such men take up arms, let kings and queens take care of themselves. When you have waked up such men to resistance unto blood, you have waked up a

lion in his den. You may kill them. They are vulnerable, besides on the heel, but, my word for it, you never can conquer them. At Old North Bridge, about nine o'clock in the forenoon, on the memorable 19th of April, 1775, King George's troops met these men, and after receiving their first fire, fled; and the flight still continues — the flight of kings before the people. This "rising" happened, by the grace of God, or rather, was ordained to be, successful, and the first and only successful one in the history of the British Empire.

Cromwell did well; but the world was not quite ready, in 1640, for the change — a change from the people being ruled by some one born for the purpose, to ruling themselves. The great Oliver, with his regiments of ironsides, singing Psalms, and rushing to battle from off their knees, vanquished King Charles I. and his bragging cavaliers in every battle, though fighting them at times against three-fold odds; but the trouble was, they did not stay vanquished. When the great Oliver died, this spirit of independence, this spirit of liberty seemed to die with him; and in a few years our Puritan Fathers saw Charles II., son of Charles I., securely seated on the British throne, and lording it over the Anglo-Saxon race. But Oliver is dead. They could dig up his bones and the bones of his old Puritan mother, who made him such a general as the world has never seen, and hang them up amid the city of London. They really were not afraid of his bare bones.

I like the Commonwealth men of 1640. It was with this seed, well sifted out from all chaff, that God sowed this Western World. Our fathers that went to Concord Fight, "*and stood fire,*" were exactly of this sort. Before them the forces of crowned heads fled, and still they flee. The fire of freedom kindled at North Bridge has been burning in the human breast ever since. It has crossed the Atlantic. It has reached the ancient thrones of Europe. Before its flashing flame, Louis Phillippe was glad to escape in disguise; and saw in a few hours the throne of the mighty Bourbons turned into ashes.

Davis, Hosmer and Hayward were Puritan, praying men.

To such men, under God, not only we, but the British nation, under what they call "their present constitution of government," owe all their liberties — all their rights. I love such men. They are the choice men of the human race. David Hume, infidel as he was, bowed in awe before their sublime virtues, and as a truthful historian has made this record — "that to the Puritans the people of Great Britain owe all the liberties and privileges secured to them in their constitution."

"Fighting, shedding blood, resisting," is sometimes a religious duty — oftener, O! far oftener than I wish it was. I deprecate war and violence as much as any one. But in a world of wrong like this, they must at times be resorted to. Men, individuals and communities, after all the talk, must sometimes fight — must sometimes lay down their lives on the field of battle, on the old Roman principle, "Give me liberty, or give me death." Fighting for liberty and the just rights of man, when they cannot, as we apprehend, be otherwise maintained, is just as plain and pressing a duty, as binding on my conscience as prayer. The one is piety God-ward, the other, piety man-ward. It so appeared to our fathers; it so appears to me. I mean to regard with charity the feelings and the conscientious scruples of those amiable men who think otherwise, and upon that ground oppose this bill; and I beg they will also respect mine. I feel precisely as Rev. George Whitefield did, when he furnished by request at Portsmouth, N. H., in 1745, where he then was, the inscription on the flag, under the waning folds of which Sir William Pepperell was to take Louisburg, and under which he did take it, backed up by the dauntless prowess of our fathers, then British soldiers, battling it for King George, which inscription was this: "*Nil desperandum Christo Duce* — "Despair of nothing with Christ for a leader." Yes; Christ, in the sober view of that apostle, would, and did lead our armies to victory; so that the Roman Catholic Power, which was then great in these parts of the earth, was broken, and, I trust, broken forever. I think just so; and let those gentlemen who differ from me consider, that perhaps George

Whitefield was right ; that it is really within the broad bounds of possibility that George Whitefield did understand the mind of the Spirit ; did interpret correctly the New Testament dispensation ; and that it is Bible, that human government, being ordained of God, shall stand, and stand by physical force, often contemptuously stigmatized, — for surely it is no fair use of terms, — as “ *brute force* ;” and so stand, because, at least, in this our day, human government cannot stand any other way — there being so much of fallen “ *human nature in all mankind*.” Yes ; our pious Puritan Fathers, in the French War in 1745, and in the War of the American Revolution in 1775, thought Jesus Christ was verily their leader. Isaac Davis thought so. George Washington thought so. And so thought John Stark, and even Ethan Allen. They were heroes ; and they were strictly Christian heroes. They appealed to Almighty God — they believed in him, as that mysterious and incomprehensible being who rules, doing his pleasure in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth.

I said, Ethan Allen so believed, and so he did ; for, when on the 10th of May, 1775, just twenty-one days after Davis fell at Old North Bridge, he surprised the British garrison at what used to be called by the old soldiers “ Fort Ti,” and was asked, when he commanded them to surrender, “ In whose name do you make the demand ? ” he replied, “ I make it in the name of God Almighty and the Continental Congress.” When Rev. Jonas Clark, Puritan Congregationalist Minister of Lexington, took his gun on the afternoon of the 19th, and would not be kept back, and rushed into battle, as I have already said, he did it with a clear conscience and a good conscience, and a well enlightened conscience ; and if you could put the question to him to-day, I am confident that the sainted Patriot and Patriarch would answer, “ *I am not sorry !* ” How could he be sorry, when such results have followed, here and all over the world, that most eventful struggle. Yes ; “ *they put their trust in God, but kept their powder dry*.” They went to Concord Fight from off their knees, and no wonder when they came back,

they came back *conquerors* ; for, though they fell as Davis and his youthful comrades did, they conquered. They gained their point — their great end. They said, "Give me liberty, or give me death ;" and though God saw fit that they should die, making, as we think they clearly were, the first, the very first open, armed resistance, the first organized martialled attack on the King's Troops in the American Revolution, heading the column of attack, other brave men following, still they won the day. And as the purchase price of their blood, God seems to have given liberty to the land ; and finally before the ball put in motion then, first at Old North Bridge, shall stop rolling, — blessed be God, it has not stopped yet, — he will give liberty to all mankind, to every son and daughter of Adam, of every tribe and kindred and tongue under heaven — all of which is their just right.

Our fathers contended for a principle, — you may call it an "abstraction," "a sentiment," what you please, — I beg leave to denominate it "a principle," — Postulate No. 1, from which others follow — and that principle was this : — "*We will not be taxed, except we are represented.*" Representation implied the full, fair, free elective franchise. It implied self-government — government based on the ballot-box — "that executes," as Pierpont says, "the will of man, as lightning does the will of God."

They established their independence. They claimed to have in the hands of the people the sovereign power ; and this not as a grant, but as an inalienable right ; not as the gift of kings, but as the gift of God ; not to particular classes or orders, but unto all mankind. But I must resume the narrative.

About seven o'clock, the British marched into Concord, with the bright sunlight dancing on their burnished armor. It was a remarkably hot, cloudless day. The two bridges over Concord River are at once, by express orders of Gen. Gage, given before they left Boston, taken possession of by the troops. A detachment of light horse, under Capt. Parsons, is despatched over North Bridge, up the left bank of the river, about two miles, to destroy or carry off what military

stores they could find, while the main body in the centre of the town do the same. And you might see them prowling round in all directions like so many sneaking wolves after their prey. At the village, they found little or nothing that they could fairly call "military stores." They were too late. Concord Patriots could get up as early in the morning as Concord Tories, with Gen. Gage at the head of them. All these matters had been seen to in good season. One Gen. Joseph Warren was "all over the lot," in those dark days, seeing to every thing "in the field," while Hancock and Adams gave counsel in the cabinet, and fed the press. However, the British rolled a few barrels of flour into the old mill-pond, and flung in a few bags of meal, and did other like deeds of daring for the veterans of King George. Let me say here, lest I should fail to say it at all, that in what follows, as in what has gone before, I shall, with poetic license, give the version of those scenes as they strike my own mind; which, while it differs from one account, may agree with another. However, if I should make any misstatement, important in its bearings upon the question before us, of the merits of Capt. Davis, and his claim upon the whole Commonwealth for a suitable monument, I will thank my learned, amiable, historical friend, over the way, the member from Charlestown, whom I regard as the first and second books of Chronicles in all these matters, to rise when I am through and make the correction. But let gentlemen remember, that, in 1835, when the centennial anniversary of the incorporation of Acton was celebrated, there were alive in Acton several men who were in arms at Concord Fight, and several more, who, as boys, ten or twelve years old, were "*lookers-on in Venice*," but whose recollections of the scenes of that greatest of all political epochs were more vivid than of the scenes of yesterday.

There was Deacon Benjamin Hayward, son of Deacon Samuel Hayward, and own brother to James Hayward, who was shot at Lexington about one o'clock in the afternoon pursuing the flying foe, the ball entering his body through this very powder-horn, under circumstances that will here-

after be alluded to ; whose family blood courses through the veins of my intelligent friend back of me, the member from Ashby, on his mother's side. How often have I sat down, and with this very powder-horn in my hand, that was, seven-five years ago, smeared all over with the life-blood of a large-hearted, affectionate, brave brother, fought over Concord Fight with good old "*Deacon Ben*," called so familiarly to distinguish him from his nephew and neighbor, Deacon Stevens Hayward, now an aged man and magistrate in Acton, one of the pillars of the Church and pillars of the State, well known and remembered, and greatly esteemed by some of you ; representing some years, on this floor, the town of Harvard, during the war of 1812, and after, the town of Acton, and quite recently, for two terms, a member from Middlesex of the other branch, an ornament and honor to any town, or any county, or any body of men ; a gentleman and Christian ; a Puritan of the Puritan stock ; the owner, and deserves to be, of this precious relic of antiquity. How often, with streams of big tears from his sightless eye-balls, as he lay upon his death-bed, and with equal streams coursing down my own face, have I fought, over and over again, with "*Deacon Ben*," this battle. And this sort of fighting, at least, and this sort of crying, always does me good ; and I should think it might do anybody good ; for these tears are tears of gratitude — gratitude to these benefactors of our country and our race, and gratitude to God, who raised them up. Let them flow then, I say, let them flow. Who would withhold them, if he could ? Who could, if he would ? I took the depositions of all these survivors ; for, till 1835, Acton men had never spoken. Others had done the talking ; though these are the men that did, — not in the least to disparage the rest, — their full share of the fighting, heading the column of attack at North Bridge, which, beyond all controversy, was the very first open, armed, martialled resistance or attack of the King's Troops in the American Revolution ; and from which attack, beyond all question, began the retreat — the rout that ended at Charlestown Neck, near sundown. I thought it high time that they, who were "*magna*

paus fui" of this transaction, should give their version of it; tell what they saw, and what they knew. Concord had had several public discourses and public celebrations of Concord Fight, and Lexington also. Acton had had none. Some of those depositions have been published, and some are still in manuscript. Yes, Sir. One of the missions that I had on earth, one that I was born into the world to accomplish, I have often thought, was to comfort these old soldiers, these scarred veterans of '75, and visit their widows in their affliction; to rock for them, as gently as possible, the cradle of their declining years; to pray with them, and for them; to smooth their dying couch, and point them, standing on the confines of eternity, to that better country, yes, far better country, even an heavenly, where, I doubt not, through riches of free grace in Christ Jesus, they are at this moment from those holy heights looking down upon you, to see how you meet, and how you treat this great question. I thank God for the privilege of presenting this petition; and with what power I have,—would I had more, if it were only for this occasion,—press upon your favorable consideration this bill—with what measure of success, will soon be seen.

At Col. James Barrett's, one of the last houses in Concord on the road to Acton from North Bridge, there were cannon, valuable cannon, and gunpowder and ball, the day before, but they had been taken care of. The cannon had been hid in the manure heaps under the barn windows. The country in the direction of Concord, and also in the direction of Worcester, had been alarmed several days before, and were expecting an invasion. They were sure, from Gage's movements in this city, all which were duly and daily reported to Hancock, Adams, Warren, and the town and province committees of safety, by faithful men like Paul Revere, of whom there were not a few, that a descent was going to be made somewhere; that the uplifted sword of King George the III., was about to fall with terrible vengeance upon some devoted head. Gage's movements were conducted with as much secrecy as possible; for Gage knew the eagle-eyed shrewdness, as well as dauntless valor of the Yankees better, it is plain

from his despatches, than any other friend of the King. The Provincial Congress that had been sitting in Concord some weeks, with Warren as its President, had adjourned Saturday before the fight, which was Wednesday, to the tenth of May then next, of which Gage probably got no notice till he undertook the expedition.

Before light, Wednesday morning, hours before the British entered Concord, a horseman, whose name was never known, going at great speed, — they spared neither horse-flesh nor man-flesh in those perilous days, — rode up to the house of Capt. Joseph Robbins, the commissioned officer in the town of Acton, who lived nearest North Bridge, and struck with a large heavy club, as they thought, the corner of the house, — a house still standing, though not inhabited, close to the grave-yard, — never dismounting, but crying out at the top of his voice, "Capt. Robbins! Capt. Robbins! up! up! the Regulars have come to Concord Rendezvous at Old North Bridge! quick as possible! alarm Acton!"

His only son, a venerable magistrate, when he told me the story, as he often did, now no more, was then asleep in the garret — a lad ten years old. But "*those rappings*," — and there was no sham about them, — and that cry, brought him to his feet instant, and every other living man and woman in that house; it waked the babe in the cradle. In a few minutes he was on "father's old mare," bound for Captain Davis, not a mile off, who commanded the minute-men, and then to Deacon Simon Hunt's in the west part of the town, who commanded the West Company as first-lieutenant, Capt. Francis Faulkner having been a few days before promoted to be major, and the vacancy not having been filled; so that there were in that little town three companies of militia on the memorable nineteenth. Every man was a soldier in those days; and they were *alarmed*, in the military sense of that word, officers and men, and went to the fight with Major Faulkner; but Davis's minute-men were ready first, and were on the ground first. They were an *elite* corps; young men, volunteers, — and give me young men for war, — these regiments of minute-men had been organized by order of the

Provincial Congress the November before, and that very wisely. They understood it. They were men exactly fitted for those times. Davis' company had turned out to drill twice a week all the Fall and Winter. This being extra military duty, and it being understood that every man must be ready at a moment's warning, they were paid by the town at the rate of eight pence for every half day. They were soon at Davis' house and gun-shop. Davis by occupation was a gunsmith. Here they waited till about fifty had arrived; while there, some of them were powdering their hair, just as the Greeks were accustomed to put garlands of flowers on their heads as they went forth to battle; and they expected a battle. They were fixing their gun-locks, and making a few cartridges; but cartridges and cartridge-boxes were rare in those days. The accoutrements of the heroes of the Revolution were the powder-horn and the bullet-pouch—at least of the militia. And Concord Fight, with all its unequalled and uneclipsed glory, was won by help of God by Massachusetts militia-men. Some were laughing and joking, to think that they were going to have, what they had for months longed for, "a hit at old Gage." But Davis was a thoughtful, sedate, serious man, a genuine Puritan, like Samuel Adams, and he rebuked them. He told them that, in his opinion, it was "a most eventful crisis for the colonies; blood would be spilt, that was certain; the crimson fountain would be opened; none could tell when it would close, nor with whose blood it would overflow. Let every man gird himself for battle and not be afraid, for God is on our side. He had great hopes that the country would be free, though he might not live to see it." The truth was, and it should come out, Davis expected to die that day if he went into battle. He never expected to come back alive to that house. And no wonder, that after the company started and had marched out of his lane some twenty rods to the high way, he halted them and went back. He was an affectionate man. He loved that youthful wife of his, who died only a few years ago, aged ninety-six, and those four sick children; and he thought to see them never again, and he never did. There was such a presenti-

ment in his mind. His widow has often told me all about it ; and she thought the same herself ; and no wonder he went back and took one more last lingering look of them, saying, — he seem to want to say something ; but as he stood on that threshold, where I have often stood, and where, in my mind's eye, I have often seen his manly form, — he could only say, " Take good care of the children," — the feelings of the father struggling in him, and for a moment almost overcoming the soldier. The ground of this presentiment was this : — A few days before the fight, Mr. Davis and wife had been away from home of an afternoon. On returning to the house, they noticed as they entered a large owl sitting on Davis' gun as it hung on the hooks — his favorite gun — the very gun that he carried to the fight, — a beautiful piece for those days, — his own workmanship — the same he grasped in both hands when he was shot at the bridge, being just about to fire himself, and which, when stone dead, he grasped still, his friends having, to get it away, to unclinch his stiff fingers.

Sir, however you may view this occurrence, or however I may, it matters not. I am telling how that brave man viewed it, and his wife and the men of those times. It was an ill omen — a bad sign. The sober conclusion was, that the first time Davis went into battle he would lose his life. This was the conclusion ; and so it turned out. The family could give no account of the creature ; and they knew not when or how it came in. The hideous bird was not allowed to be disturbed or frightened away ; and there he stayed two or three days, sitting upon that gun. But mark ; with this distinct impression on his mind, did the heart of this Puritan Patriarch quail ? No ; not at all, not at all. He believed in the Puritans' God — the Infinite Spirit sitting on the throne of the universe, Proprietor of all, Creator and Upholder of all, superintending and disposing of all ; that the hairs of his head were all numbered, and not even a sparrow could fall to the ground without his God's express notice, knowledge and consent. He took that gun then from those hooks, with no trembling hand or wavering heart, and with his trusty

sword hanging by his side, he started for North Bridge with the firm tread of a giant. Death! Davis did not fear to die. And he had the magic power, which some men certainly have, God bestows it upon them, to inspire every one around them with the same feeling. His soldiers, to a man, would have gone anywhere after such a leader. After about two miles of hurried march, they came out of the woods, only a few rods from Col. James Barrett's in Concord, and halted in the highway, — whether discovered or not is uncertain; (this road came into the road by Barrett's, some twenty rods from Barrett's house,) — looking on with burning indignation, to see Capt. Parsons and his detachment of British troopers with axes break up the gun-carriages, and bring out hay and wood, and burn them in the yard. They had great thoughts of firing in upon them then and there to venture. But Davis was a military man, and his orders were to rendezvous at North Bridge; and he knew very well, that taking possession of North Bridge would cut off all retreat for this detachment of horse, and they must be taken prisoners. In a few minutes more he wheeled his company into line on the high lands north of North Bridge, taking the extreme left of the line, — that line being formed, facing the river, — which was his place, as the youngest commissioned officer present in the regiment — a place occupied a few days before by him at a Regimental Muster of the minute-men. A council of war was immediately summoned by Colonel James Barrett, and attended on the spot — made up of commissioned officers and committees of safety.

The question was, What shall now be done?

The Provincials had been talking for months, nay, for years, of the wrongs they had borne at the hands of a cruel mother-land. They had passed good, glorious, paper resolutions by the dozen. They had fired off their paper bullets, but, What shall *now be done*? Enough had been said. What shall now be done? What a moment! What a crisis for the destinies of this land and of all lands, of the rights and liberties of the human race! Never was council of war or council of peace called to meet a more important question;

one, on the decision of which, more was at stake. Their council was divided. Some thought it best at once to rush down and take possession of the bridge, and cut off the retreat of Capt. Parsons; others thought not. Here were, probably, found in battle array over six hundred Provincial Troops, standing there under arms. Colonel Smith and Major Pitcairn were in plain sight, with their red coats on, their cocked-up hats, and their spy-glasses, inspecting, from the old grave-yard hill, the gathering foe; for they came in from all directions suddenly, unaccountably, like the gathering of a summer thunder-cloud. Of course, it was admitted on all hands, that they could take possession of the bridge; but it was to be expected that this skirmish must bring on a general engagement with the main body in the town. The Provincials would be in greater force by twelve o'clock M., than at nine. And if the whole British Army of eight hundred men should take the field against them in their present number, most undoubtedly the men would run — they never would “*stand fire*.” Their officers thought so; their officers said so on the spot. They gave it as their opinion, and it is probable that no attack at that hour would have been made, had it not happened that at that moment the smoke began to rise from the centre of the town, all in plain sight from these heights, — the smoke of burning houses. And they said, “Shall we stand here like cowards and see Old Concord burnt?” Colonel Barrett gave consent to make the attack. But who will head the column? Every older officer hesitated, and respectfully and modestly declined the honor, excusing themselves, on the ground, that they feared their men, after all, “*would not stand fire*.” (c)

One word right here, on this point, before I forget it. I do not take the ground, that Colonel James Barrett was a coward, or Capt. Miles or Brown, or any of those men there. No, no; that is not my view of it. They had fought the French and Indians twenty years before, and conquered them. They did not fear gunpowder and ball. No men feared them less. But I will tell you what they did fear; they feared to die by the halter; they hated to die on the

scaffold, as ten thousand British subjects had done, and ten thousand to the end of it ; and they knew it, for taking up arms against the King. They were men acquainted with the history of the British Nation. If this rising had proved unsuccessful, as many of the best informed men in the land at that time really thought it would and must, and as every rising of the people against the Crown certainly had in these modern times, then every man of them who took part in this transaction, if he survived, must die, and die a *disgraced, defeated, detested rebel*. His name, so far as British historians could do it, — and they had always been in the interests of the King and the Ministry, and had always done it, — consigned over to everlasting infamy ; a hissing and a by-word to all generations ; their property confiscated ; their surviving children marked as belonging to a perfidious, hated race, that the world ought to be rid of.

Considerations of this sort made the brave men hesitate, and the older officers, and older men, particularly, — for it cannot be denied, that some of the bravest and best men in the colonies were tories — men whose courage never could be questioned or suspected — men who had held high commissions, civil and military, under the King, and were at that moment, in one sense, officers in the British Army, with the epaulettes and cockades and royal insignia about their persons. They knew how Major General Whalley, Major General Goffe fared, — for the hand they had in the trial of King Charles I., an infamous, faithless wretch, who could not be trusted an hour, who, if he had not violated the most solemn promises, and broken the most sacred oaths, might have lived.

Davis came back to his company, drew his sword, and commanded them to advance six paces. He then faced them to the right, and, at his favorite tune of "*The White Cockade*," led the column of attack towards the bridge. By the side of Davis marched Major Buttrick, of Concord, as brave a man as lived, and old Colonel Robinson, of Westford. The British, on this, began to take up the bridge. The Americans, on this, quickened their pace. Immediately, the firing

on both sides began. Davis is at once shot dead through the heart. The ball passed quite through his body, making a very large wound, perhaps driving in a button of his coat. His blood gushed out in one great stream, flying, it is said, more than ten feet, besprinkling and besmearing his own clothes, these shoe buckles, and the clothes of orderly-sergeant, David Furbush, and a file leader, Thomas Thorp. Davis, when hit, as is usual with men when shot thus through the heart, leaped up his full length, and fell over the causeway on to the wet ground, firmly grasping, all the while, with both hands, that beautiful gun; and when his weeping comrades came to take care of his youthful but bloody remains, they with difficulty unclinchd those hands, now cold and stiff in death. He was just elevating to his sure eye this gun, — no man was a surer shot, — what a baptism of blood did those soldiers then receive! It might have been well, if my friend, the member from West Brookfield, had had a portion of it. I have no doubt myself, it would have made him a better man, and a better patriot.

This Thomas Thorp, one of your own Boston boys, put out to live with an Acton farmer till twenty-one, died in Acton not two years ago, aged ninety-six. And he never grounded arms till the end of the War. He was an orderly-sergeant near six years in the Continental Army. He used to say, The blood of Davis he could always see on his clothes, and he never could, and never would give up the cause. He loved Davis as an own brother.

These buckles were given me by Davis' widow when ninety years old, under very affecting circumstances. I had rendered her aid in procuring an annuity of fifty dollars a year from the Commonwealth, and that being insufficient, two hundred dollars more from the United States. Before these grants, she had nearly come to want. The money arrived. We were all delighted at the success, almost unexpected, of the two applications; for advocating which, before the House of Representatives, I am under greater obligations to my eloquent friend on my right, the member from Newbury, then in the House, than to any other man. I shall

never forget it in him ; and to the Hon. Daniel Webster, in the United States Senate, for which, with all his recent sins on his head, I must love him as long as I live. He never employed his gigantic mind in a nobler cause.

The money came. "Take your pay, Mr. Woodbury," said the old lady ; "I am fully paid already." "But if you have any Revolutionary relic of your husband, Capt. Davis, Mrs. Leighton,"—she was married twice after she lost Davis,— "if nothing more than a button, I should like it right well," was the reply. She took her cane and hobbled along to her old chest, and drew out these shoe buckles. "There," said she, "I have lost every thing else that belonged to him. These I had reserved for the Davis children ; but if you will accept them, they are yours."

Noble Davis ! Dying, but still making the first successful declaration of your country's independence, one year earlier than that of July 4th, 1776, written out, not in ink, not on parchment, not on paper, but in thy best blood, at Old North Bridge, the nineteenth of April, 1775, baptising the land,— *and the baptism stands good, and, I trust in God, will ever stand good*, never again, till Davis is forgotten, and his blood, wherewith we were made free, is trampled *under foot of men*, and "*counted an unholy thing*," will the ground of Old Middlesex be trod by an invading foe. May thy dying words, "*I am not afraid to go*," be, to the end of time, all over this oppressed earth, *the rallying battle-cry of freemen*, till all men shall be free, and every human being "shall sit down under his own vine and fig-tree, with none to molest, none to make afraid."

Precious relics ! Seventy-five years ago bathed in the heart's blood of one, who, in the name of God and oppressed humanity, headed the *column of the first successful attack* in modern times, of people resisting kings, of ruled against rulers, of oppressed against oppressors—yes, the very first in these years of the world ; but, by the grace of God, who has proclaimed himself "*the God of the oppressed*,"—*not the last*,—*no, by no means*. When I have done with them, I will hand them over to my children, as worth their weight

in gold. By these buckles would I swear my son, as Hamilcar, that noble African Prince, swore his son Hannibal, "Never to give up to Rome;" and he never did, till the flag of Carthage waved over the imperial city. I say, by these shoe-buckles would I swear my son, "*to be faithful unto death*," as Davis was in the cause of human liberty and the just rights of man. Handle them, Sir, handle them. How, at the touch of these, patriotism, like electricity, will thrill through your bones!!!

Abner Hosmer, a private in Davis' company of minute-men, only twenty-two years old, unmarried, the son of Deacon Jonathan Hosmer, of the Acton church, a friend and neighbor of Davis, fell dead at the same volley, shot through the head. Other Acton men were wounded, but I believe no others seriously. The fire was returned, — two Britons killed, others were wounded. On this, the rout of the British immediately began; and in one point of view, — it is not ended yet, — for it was the rout No. 1, of *kings and crowned heads* fleeing before the people. By the blessing of God, may that rout continue, till the race of hereditary monarchs shall be extinct over the whole earth, and no man shall rule, except he is chosen for it by the ruled at the ballot-box.

Captain Laurie's detachment now run for the town. Parsons' soon returns over North Bridge, and by-and-by, after a hasty refreshment, the last that hundreds of them ever tasted, the whole British army, under Smith and Pitcairn, are on their way for Boston. This was about four, and most of the time, that whole afternoon, they were in entire disorder, — filling the highway from side to side, as old Mr. Aaron Jones, of Acton, who followed them to Charlestown Neck, said in his desposition in 1835, "*LIKE A FLOCK OF SHEEP.*"

At Fiske's hill, in Lexington, they had, as some thought, the severest encounter all the way. The road wound round the eastern base of a steep, thick, wooded hill. James Hayward, who had been active and foremost all the way, after the British had passed on, came down from the hill, and was aiming for a well of water, — the same well is still to be seen at the two-story, Dutch-roofed red house on the right

from Concord to Lexington, not two miles from the old meeting-house. As he passed by the end of that house, he spied through the window a British soldier, still lingering behind the main body, — plundering. The Briton also saw him, and run to the front door to cut him off. Lifting his loaded musket, he exclaims, "*You are a dead man!*" Hayward immediately exclaimed, "*So are you!*" They both fired, and both fell. The Briton was shot dead, — Hayward, mortally wounded, — the ball entering his side, through this hole, — (holding up the powder-horn), — driving the splinters into his body. He lived eight hours, — retained his reason to the last. His venerable father, Deacon Samuel Hayward, whose house he had left that 'morning in the bloom of vigorous manhood, had time to reach Lexington and comfort him with his conversation, his reading the Scriptures, and prayer. "James, you are mortally wounded. You can live but a few hours. Before sunrise to-morrow, you will, no doubt, be a corpse. Are you sorry that you 'turned out?' " "Father, hand me my powder-horn and bullet-pouch. I started with one pound of powder, and forty balls. You see what is left." (He had used all but two or three of them.) "You see what I have been about. I never did such a forenoon's work before. I am not sorry. Tell mother not to mourn too much for me, *for I am not sorry I turned out.* I die willingly for my country. She will now, I doubt not, by help of God, be free. And tell her whom I love better than my mother, you know who I mean, '*that I am not sorry.*' I never shall see her again. May I meet her in heaven."

Hayward had lost, by the cut of an axe, part of his toes on one foot, and was not liable to do military duty. He "turned out" that morning as a volunteer, in the strictest sense, as hundreds did. He was one of the earliest at Davis' house, — belonged to the same school district, and born and bred by the side of him, — their fathers being next door neighbors. He was twenty-eight years old, — one of the most athletic, fine looking, well-informed, well-bred young men in town. He had been a school-master. He knew the crisis. He knew what he was fighting for, and what was to be

gained. He came early to Davis' house, and acted with his company. He was seen to go to grinding on the grindstone the point of his bayonet there. On being asked why he did it, "Because," said he, "I expect, before night, we shall come to a push with them, and I want my bayonet sharp."

The question is now, Do these men deserve this monument? — One that shall speak, — *Davis' case is without a parallel, and was so considered by this Legislature and by Congress, when they granted aid to his widow*, — there never can be another. Give them the marble. Vote them the monument. One that shall speak to all future generations, and speak to the terror of kings, and to the encouragement of all, who will, to be free, and who, when the bloody crisis comes, to strike for it, "ARE NOT AFRAID TO GO." And ought not this Commonwealth to aid in the effort? Did not Davis die for the Commonwealth? These questions are now to be settled by this House.

Do you want a precedent? You have one. This Commonwealth, in 1798, "in the abundance of their joy and gratitude, and out of their deep poverty," in the words of the apostle, "abounding unto the riches of their liberality," did, on petition, grant the sum of four hundred dollars, to aid the town of Lexington in building the monument on the common over their dead. And I never heard that the Commonwealth was any the poorer for it. It was a good vestment of four hundred dollars. Could they have made a better? Who, in reading the words on that monument, "*ever had indignation*," and with another, whose hateful name I will not mention, was ready to say, *Why was this waste?* Why was not all this given to the poor? Who has ever looked upon that monument, and not had his piety and his patriotism kindle into a brighter flame? What a fountain of holy influences for the good of our nation, and for the good of the world, is that granite pile on yonder height, pointing to heaven, — and to that the State voted seven thousand dollars, and did well. Who would dig it down but crowned tyrants? Can it be offensive to God? Is it not Scriptural?

Did not Samuel the Prophet take a stone and set it up between Mizpeh and Shem, and call the name of it Ebenezer, saying, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us?" And ought we not to set up our Ebenezer, saying, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us?" Let these monumental piles be regarded as tokens of gratitude to God as well as man. Did not good old Joshua "*take a great stone*, and set it up, under the oak," saying to all the people, "*this stone shall be a witness unto us*, lest we deny our Lord." Sir, let these stones be a witness to us, lest we deny our God, who fought for us all our battles, and, in whose name our fathers conquered. What meets the eye affects the heart. I admit the application is extraordinary, and so are the grounds of it. But, mark my words, there is not, and there never can be, in this Commonwealth, a parallel case; *for there never can be but one man who headed the first column of attack on the King's Troops in the Revolutionary War. And Isaac Davis was that man. Others fell, but not exactly as he fell.* We put the application for aid on that extraordinary ground, where self-sacrificing patriotism is best honored and rewarded; there will ever be found the best patriots, and the most of them. Money! What is money made for, except for such noble ends? Retrenchment! Retrenchment! Will you run it out till it turns into meanness? The sooner such a party, for the honor of the Commonwealth, go out of power, the better.

Sir, the monument will be built. Let gentlemen in the opposition compose themselves. If the State does not aid, it shall, by help of God, be built. Acton is a small, rough town, with but little of the thing called money, in it; but we can find enough, I guess, for this monument. But, is it not fitting and proper that the State should aid? Did Davis pour out his blood for Acton alone? If so, let Acton build the monument. Let it enjoy the high privilege. Did he not die for you, Sir, for you, Sir, for all of us? By his stripes, are we not all healed? By his blood, are we not all, this day, free? Have we not, at the price of his blood, this Christian Commonwealth? I trow, we verily have. Do you not think so, Sir? Was he not one of your own militia-men?

I cannot understand the sneers, yes, the sneers of certain members of this House at the broaching of this subject. I know what I say, — *the sneers* of certain members of this House, when this discussion began. I repeat it, — I do not understand them. I do not know exactly what to make of them. Has patriotism died out in the breasts of my countrymen? Are my brethren in the ministry a corps of Tories, — marshalled under some Benedict Arnold? I cannot believe it. No, Sir, I cannot believe it. Is it not a beautiful thing to die for one's country? Is not "*resistance to tyrants obedience to God*," still?

One word more, and I am done. The House have showed themselves exceedingly patient, for which they have my most grateful acknowledgements. I will thank them still more for their vote in favor of this bill. Sir, I am no painter. I devoutly wish to God I was. I love painting. I love pictures. I wish our own Allston^{*} was alive. I would take him to Acton with me, and I would show him the humble dwelling, not a mile from my own, of Isaac Davis. I would take him to that funeral that was had there on the afternoon of the twentieth of April, 1775. I would show him those three dead, coffined, Christian heroes, side by side, looking as if they were still alive but asleep, — Davis, Hosmer and Hayward, and the throng of those sedate Puritans, the fathers and mothers in Israel sitting around them, — the elders of the church and the town. I would show him the widow of Davis, — a straight, firm, beautiful woman in her day, and the four fatherless children, — some of them not able to understand, for the life of them, "*what they had been doing to father*." I would show them the venerable fathers of these three slaughtered young men, all persons of prayer; all of that ancient order of nobility, never to be extinct in our Republic, — called "*PURITANS*," — two of them Deacons of the Congregational Church. I would show him their mothers, their sisters, their brothers and son. I would show him, with still more interest, two youthful maidens there, shedding hotter tears than the rest, whom Hosmer and Hayward loved better than father or mother, or brother or sister; and last of

all, old Rev. John Swift, standing in the midst of the multitude, — for the whole town was together, — men, women and children, — five hundred souls not going to the meeting-house, not a mile off, for the simple reason, that it would not hold half of them ; he should not leave till he had heard the singing, — we always sing at a true New England funeral, — and the Psalm is the sixtieth Psalm of Watts, C. M. : “ *Lord, hast thou cast the nation off?* ” — to the tune of Old Bangor, (*d*) chanting which, the great Oliver with his ironsides won the Battle of Preston against three-fold odds ; then when he had heard Mr. Swift’s sermon, on the great theological, gospel truth of 1775, in all the pulpits of the Thirteen Colonies, with very few exceptions, “ That resistance to tyrants is obedience to God,” I would dismiss him to his paints and brushes.

NOTES.

(a) After the idea of absolute non-resistance had been under discussion a year or two, and its friends had had several public meetings, an Anti-Slavery Convention occurred in Boston of the peculiar stamp of Mr. Garrison, Quincy and others. Silas Lampson, his venerable form clothed in white, leaning on his scythe-snath, and Abby Folsom in white also appeared and insisted on taking the meeting into their own hands, and could not, and would not be ruled down by President or Chairman, or what not. They said, "Mr Chairman, we are all Chairmen. Who made you to rule over us?" The meeting could not go on. The business of the Convention could not proceed, that was certain. They bore it awhile, as all good Christian men should; but after remonstrating with them, and protesting against their lawless course, it was concluded upon by all the wise ones among them, that, at any rate, it must be stopped, — non-resistance or not; and "Lampson, surnamed Silas," as he styles himself, and Miss Abby, should comply with the rules and regulations of the meeting, *volens*, or they should quit the house. They resolved to do it "peacably, if they could, — forcibly, if they must." And now mark. This very wise and proper conclusion was come to by Mr. Garrison, Mr. E. Quincy, Mr. Phillips, Mr. Rogers, (since dead), and the whole of them, who were in fact the great originators at this time, and advocates of this absurd doctrine of non-resistance. Silas and Abby began their noise again, and what was the result? The result was this: — Not willing to go otherwise, Abby was forcibly ceased by Wendell Phillips, Esq., with his genteel non-resistance aristocracy, at one end, and Nathaniel Peabody Rogers, Esq., — an equally ardent advocate of this silly doctrine, at the other, and borne out of the hall, crying out, and screaming, but not resisting otherwise, at the very top of her voice, and laid gently down at the door. This beautiful piece of mortality being thus disposed of, they turned poor Silas, who was some heavier, over to the Boston constables.

(b) On the sixth of December, 1776, the Provincial Congress, then sitting at Concord, addressed a circular letter to every clergyman in Massachusetts Colony to secure their co-operation, in their official capacity, in the work of resisting, first by words, and then with blows, the encroachments and oppression of the King and Parliament. This letter runs thus: —

"Rev. Sir: We cannot but acknowledge the goodness of Heaven in constantly supplying us with preachers of the Gospel, which concern has been the temporal and spiritual happiness of this people. In a day like this, when all the friends of civil and religious liberty are exerting themselves to deliver this country from its present calamities, we cannot but place great hope in an order of men, who have ever distinguished themselves in their country's cause, and do *therefore recommend* to the ministers of the Gospel in the several towns, and other places in this Colony, that they assist us in avoiding that dreadful

slavery, with which we are now threatened." — *Gordon's American Revolution*, Vol. 1., P. 417, 418.

They encouraged men to enlist. They often went themselves as soldiers, musicians and chaplains. They made the men as bold as so many lions, by telling them, which was the truth, that the God of Israel would go before them in a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night, and that in his name they would and must conquer. Their language was, "*Choose out men ; go, fight Amalek ; a curse is pronounced against every man that withholdeth his hand for the shedding of blood, and even on him also, 'that doeth this work of the Lord negligently.'*" Cooke's sermon at Lexington, April 19th, 1777, at a sort of Annual Feast of the Passover kept up there all through the War by Rev. Jonas Clark, and other Reverend Divines of Old Middlesex, shows this clearly. Going up to that War, was "*going up to the help of the Lord against the mighty.*" They did "trust in God and keep their powder dry ;" and so they did conquer. However it may be with the clergy of this day, it is certain, that seventy-five years ago, liberty, popular liberty had no firmer friends, no more resolute defenders. no more out-spoken advocates *in the pulpit*, and in the town meeting, in season and out of season.

At Littleton, next town but one to Concord on the north, was a Tory Minister, Rev. Mr. Rogers. I know not one other in all the Province. There doubtless were others ; but truth requires us to say, that in no one class or profession in all the Thirteen Colonies, was a Tory "so rare a bird" as among the Clergy. No, not even among the commissioned officers that had borne arms in previous wars under the King. Mr. Rogers was a Tory, and lived in the same house now occupied by Rev. Mr. White. He had a right to be a Tory ; but he had no right to be a Tory, and stay at Littleton ; and I do not wonder that, after awhile, an attempt was made one evening to shoot him in his own house. Several balls were fired. I have put my finger into the ball-holes ; and the old gentleman barely escaped ; and with this loud warning he packed up, I think, for Halifax. But with very few exceptions, the clergy of 1775 were Oliver Cromwell men, in their notions of CIVIL GOVERNMENT — Commonwealth men — and ready to resist the Crown.

They did the cause of liberty incalculable good. It is supposed that without their large influence, exerted as it was, *the War of the Revolution could never have been carried on.* There is not a meeting-house in all New England, seventy-five years old, that did not resound with most eloquent and moving appeals on the Sabbath, in favor of the struggle for independence, going to clear up all conscientious scruples on the *right*, the *inalienable right to resist* the King, and to overturn the government. The ordinary duty was, "to obey every ordinance of man ;" but when government had become a scourge, — an instrument of oppression, and the King an enemy to liberty and the just rights of man, no longer a terror to evil-doers, and an encouragement to them that do well, but the reverse of all this, — the clergy of 1775 held, and so taught on the Sabbath in the pulpit, and so argued in open town meeting, that there was obviously a reserved right to resist, rebel, revolutionize. If men have forgotten it, if minister-haters will not admit it, the stone would cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber would answer it, and testify that it was verily so.

(c) Mr. Amos Baker, of Lincoln, last April, the last survivor, testified, that as "we were going to the bridge, it was mentioned, between Major Buttrick and Captain Isaac Davis, that the minute-men had better be put in front, because they were the only men that had bayonets, and it was not certain whether the British would fire, or whether they would charge bayonets without firing." This aged man, ninety-four years old, no doubt meant to state the truth, but he is probably mistaken about this conversation. How could he hear the conversation of Buttrick and Davis, as they were going to march to

the bridge? — Davis' company was front, and so, of course, entirely out of his hearing. He is certainly mistaken as to some of his statements; for instance, that "Major Buttrick marched first, and Capt. Davis next to him, and as for Colonel Robinson, of Westford, he did not see him to know him." Solomon Smith and Thomas Thorp were of Davis' company of minute-men, and marched directly after these officers, heading the column of attack; and in 1835, they gave their depositions, after going on to the ground, and looking over the premises, and with a surveyor, making a map of the battle-ground. I myself was with them. They say, "Major Buttrick and Colonel Robinson marched with Capt. Davis." But Mr. Baker did not see Colonel Robinson at all. He does not appear to have been a minute-man himself, though he had a bayonet. All the companies that paraded in a line at about nine o'clock that forenoon on the heights north of North Bridge, were companies of minute-men, mainly, a few men belonging to other companies, and a few belonging to none. The truth, I am forced on the whole to conclude, was this: — That in view of its being the first open, organized, armed resistance to King George in the Revolution, — the first overt act of rebellion, — of high treason against the British throne, men dreaded to make it, — knowing well, that after it was made, if unsuccessful, they were liable to be seized, transported to England, and there tried and hung. It was not going to attack the French or Indians, but a detachment of the British army; and that Davis, the youngest officer on the ground, was ordered from the extreme left in a line of five hundred or six hundred men, to the extreme right, and so headed the column of attack, not because they had bayonets on their guns, (and I would ask why Davis' company alone should have had bayonets, why not Concord companies. Was not iron and steel as plenty in Concord as in the little poor town of Acton? —) but because they had bayonets made of better stuff than iron or steel — stuff called "pluck." That is my conclusion? It may be an erroneous one; they were not afraid to go. Davis thought they would stand fire; and they did.

Phinney gives the true account of this onset at Old North Bridge, in these words: — "They accordingly marched toward the bridge with drums beating, the Acton company, commanded by Capt. Davis, marching at the head of the column, led on by Robinson, Buttrick and Davis. They had not then received intelligence of the events at Lexington."

Gordon says, "While at Concord, the enemy disabled two twenty-four pounders, destroying their carriages, wheels and timbers, sixteen wheels for brass three pounders, two carriages, with wheels for two four pounders, about five hundred weight of balls, which they threw into the rivers and wells, and stove about sixty barrels of flour, one-half of which was afterwards saved."

Rev. Jonas Clarke's narrative reads thus: — "A dwelling-house and barn of Deacon Loring, Mrs. Lydia Milliken's house, and her son's shop, and a house and shop of Mr. Joshua Bond, were laid in ashes. Several buildings were set on fire, but the flames were fortunately extinguished after the enemy left. Property to a considerable amount, consisting of clothing, furniture, provisions, &c., were wantonly destroyed."

Robert Monroe, was not, I think, in commission at Lexington on the nineteenth. He was known as "*Ensign Monroe*," for holding that commission in the old French War at the taking of Louisburg. Davis, I think, was the *first American officer killed in the Revolution*; was the only officer, then in commission, killed anywhere the nineteenth of April, 1775.

Of the eight men killed at Lexington in the morning, only four were killed on the common, to wit, Parker, Muzzy, Robert Monroe and J. Harrington.

"The Regulars continued to fire as long as they could see a man of Captain Parker's company in arms."

(d) The Psalm is the following : — Sixtieth of Watts, C. M.

“ Lord, hast thou cast the nation off ?
Must we forever mourn, ?
Wilt thou indulge immortal wrath ?
Shall mercy ne'er return ?

The terror of one frown of thine,
Melts all our strength away.
Like men that totter drunk with wine,
We tremble in dismay.

Our nation trembles at thy stroke,
And dreads thy lifted hand ;
O heal the people thou hast broke,
And save the sinking land.

Lift up thy banner in the field,
For those who fear thy name ;
Defend thy people with thy shield,
And put our foes to shame.

Go with our armies to the fight,
Their Guardian and their God ;
In vain confederate powers unite
Against thy lifted rod.

Our troops shall gain a wide renown,
By thine assisting hand ;
'Tis God who treads the mighty down,
And makes the feeble stand.”





JAN 28 1961

D. Wolff

JAN 3

1962

"

FEB 5

1963

G. Westley

